

The Power of Words we Speak

The words we speak are incredibly powerful! They can be either powerfully negative, or powerfully positive. They can either destroy or build up. Our spoken words can have amazing results, good or bad, and God's word is also amazingly powerful—for good.

Proverbs 18:21. Death and life are in the power of the tongue, and those who love it shall eat the fruit of it.

This verse shows that our words not only affect the person we speak to, but also it produces either life or death in us. To speak death is to talk negatively all the time, to complain, or to speak words of defeat.

Words slip out of our mouths, and then we can't take them back once they have been spoken. It's like trying to pick up the pillow full of feathers once they have been scattered to the wind. Every one of us has regretted some of the things we have said. We have thought, "I wish I hadn't said that!" or, "I'll never say that again!" or similar. Or what parent has not said to a child, "You must learn to control your tongue!"

To speak life means to speak how God would speak about any issue.

There is a common saying, "Clothes make the man." And there is some truth in that saying. Someone once said, "We are clothed by the words we speak." Everyone knows us by the sort of clothes we wear, whether they are literal or whether they are the words we speak. Pretty well all of us are very sensitive to the words of others.

We thrive when we are affirmed and encouraged, but cutting remarks devastate us, and we try to cope with life without showing outwardly how words have destroyed us on the inside.

Parents may have said, "You were a mistake." "You're hopeless!" "You idiot!" "You'll never do any good!" or, "Why can't you be like your brother/sister?" or similar comments. They may not even realise the damage that those comments caused the child. They adversely affect the child right into adulthood. In reality, they amount to curses spoken unwittingly over their children.

A little rhyme children sometimes use in an attempt to protect themselves goes like this. "Sticks and stones may break my bones, but names will never hurt me." This may sound very brave, but unfortunately it is not true. Some people have been so devastated by the words of others that the whole of their lives are in ruins.

The tragedy is that the other people may be completely unaware of the destruction their words have inflicted. Most of us can look back and remember how words spoken by others have deeply wounded us. The problem is that we are left with the scars in our soul. We have to cope with their effects left behind in our lives, often many years later.

We need to be healed of the effects of destructive words spoken either to us or by us. We cannot just ignore them because they continue to do their deadly work. And God is the One who knows how to heal those scars.

Good News

But there is another side to the picture. And this is the good news! Our words also have incredible power to build up and heal. That is why we need to become aware of what we speak and allow God to help us change destructive habits of speech that come with us from the old life before we knew Jesus.

We can learn to speak life to others, and we want to look at how we can do that later in this session. We have a choice whether we use our words as an instrument for speaking life or death, and in that choice, we also determine what fruit grows in our lives.

Maybe the Holy Spirit has been revealing negative words you may have spoken, about yourself, others, or your circumstances. If he reveals anything to you, don't feel condemned by it, or feel that nothing can change.

There is something that you can do about it! Also, ask the Holy Spirit about destructive words that have been spoken to you and wounded you.

Changing the way we speak

So how do we change our old ways of talking?

Here are four steps.

1. REPENT

Repent of the negative words you have spoken. That means to stop excusing yourself. See your negative words as God sees them—that you are bringing death upon yourself. Ask His forgiveness for bringing negativity on yourself or others through the words you have spoken. Choose to forgive any who have wounded you by their words and ask God's forgiveness for them.

2. RENOUNCE

Renounce the consequences in your life of the words you have spoken, or others have spoken over you. Speak out loud that you will have nothing further to do with the old ways of talking, in Jesus' name.

3. BREAK

Break the effect of negative words—yours or others'—over your life. Speak that command out loud in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ. As you do, the ties to those destructive words will be cut. That is the power of your words being put to good use.

4. SPEAK BLESSING

Speak blessings on yourself, on other people, and the circumstances you are in. You are releasing that blessing as you speak it out.

You may not change your old patterns of speech overnight. You may even fall back into old ways of talking from time to time without realizing it. But don't be discouraged.

God is in the process of changing you. Holy Spirit will prompt you when what you have just said is not according to His ways. Again, don't be condemned. Just use the four steps outlined above and step out of the negative consequences of the words you have spoken.

And ask God to help you change in that area. He will help you because He has promised to.

PRACTICAL STEPS

Here are some practical steps that you can do to change. One thing you can do is to displace the store of negative things in your lives with the positive.

The best way to do that is to fill your mind with God's Word, the Bible.

Psalm 119:11 — I have hidden
Your Word in my heart, so that I
might not sin against You.

The word hidden in this verse means to store up, to fill up the reserved space. So if there is a great store of God's Word in our heart, that is what we will speak from. And we will reap the multiplied harvest of blessings—on us, as well as on others!

Psalm 141:3 — Set a watch, O
Jehovah, before my mouth; keep
the door of my lips.

If we have stored up God's Word in our heart, we can use His Word as we talk with Him. That's a great way of agreeing with God. For example, in relation to the power of our words, how about using Psalm 141:3 as a prayer?

No one is able to clearly discern his or her thoughts and intentions. But God has breathed life into the Bible, and He can speak to us about our true motives through it.

That's why we need to store His Word up in our hearts. It can discern our motives before we talk with others, and prevent us from being trapped by our words. It can literally change the way we talk!

Before we speak to someone,

it would be good to ask ourselves the following questions:

1. What will be the consequences of what I say? Positive or negative?
2. Is there any hint of poison in what I want to say?
3. Is what I am about to say going to encourage people, or discourage them?
4. Will what I say help the person to grow, or will it have the opposite effect?
5. How can I impart grace to the person who is listening?

Bible Verses

Here are some Bible verses that you can read just from the Psalms and the Proverbs to see something about what God says about the words we speak.

Psalms 15:1-3; 34:13; 37:30-31; 39:1; 119:13, 27, 46, 172; 120:2; 145:5-7,

Proverbs 4:24; 6:16-19; 10:11-14; 19:21, 32; 11:11-14; 12:6; 13:14; 17:18; 13:2-3; 15:1-7, 23, 26, 28; 16:21, 23, 24, 27, 28; 17:4, 7, 9, 20, 27, 28; 18:4, 6-8, 13, 20, 21; 19:1, 28; 20:15, 21:23, 24:1-2, 6; 25:11, 15, 23; 26:5, 20, 21-23, 28; 29:11, 20; 31:26.